

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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ACDA-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 L-02

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R 221050Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4887

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCEUR

S E C R E T SANAA 0176

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: YAR AWAITS NEW CABINET

SUMMARY: AYNi PUBLICLY CRITICIZED FOR FAILING ACHIEVE REFORM. THREE LEFTIST MINISTERS RESIGNED AND WERE ARRESTED. SPECULATION OVER NEW PRIMIN CONTINUES WITH MAKKI AND AMRI AS LEADING CANDIDATES. FORMER WOULD MAKE YARG APPEAR LESS SUBSERVIENT TO SAG WITHOUT POSING POLITICAL THREAT. ABU LUHUM POSITION WORSENING. SEVERAL SINAN ABU LUHUM INITIATIVES TO REVERSE TREND HAVE FAILED. BUILDUP OF MILITARY AND TRIBAL ELEMENTS IN SANAA, BUT CONFRONTATION SEEMS UNLIKELY UNLESS SINAN REACTS IN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY IRRATIONAL FASHION.

1. LOCAL POLITICAL SCENT HAS CONTINUED HECTIC SINCE DISMISSAL PRIMIN AL-AYNI JAN 16. PUBLIC LETTER SENT FROM COMMAND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN HAMDI TO AYNi SAYS THAT HE WILL BE SUCCEDED

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BY FULLY LEGITIMATE CABINET UNDER RESTORED CONSTITUTION WHICH

WILL BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT REFORMS CALLED FOR BY JUNE 1974
"CORRECTIVE MOVEMENT". OBJECT OF THIS PHRASING, ACCORDING TO
MINSTATE SAID, IS TO BLAME AYNi OBLIQUELY FOR LACK OF PROGRESS
IN ACHIEVING REFORM.

2. OTHER CABINET MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CONTINUE CARRY OUT
THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN PREPARATION FOR MAJOR
CABINET CHANGE ONCE NEW PRIMIN SELECTED. DESPITE YARG DENIALS
IN PRESS JANUARY 20, IT COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THREE BAATHI
MINISTERS -- MINECON ABD AL-WAHAB MUHAMUD, MINSUPPLY LTC SULTAN
AL-QIRSHI (A RADICAL SUBVERSIVE), AND MINMUNICIPALITIES
ABDU ALI UTHMAN (A RELATIVELY MODERATE US-EDUCATED MA) HAVE
RESIGNED IN PROTEST OVER REMOVAL AYNi. THERE ARE SEVERAL
RELIABLE REPORTS, CONFIRMED BY FSL EYEWITNESS IN CASE MINECON,
THAT ALL THREE WERE QUICKLY ARRESTED. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER,
THAT UTHMAN RELEASED AFTER ONE DAY. REASON FOR THIS UNUSUALLY
STRONG REACTION IS STATEMENT IN JOINT RESIGNATION LETTER TO HAMDI
THAT THEY COULD NOT TAKE ORDERS FROM FOREIGN STATE (I.E. SAG)
INFERRING THAT HAMDI PUPPET OF SAUDIS.

3. MFA PROTOCOL SOURCE HAS CONFIRMED THAT FORMER PRIMIN AND
NOW AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HASAN MAKKI IS BEING RECALLED TO
SANAA FOR "CONSULTATIONS". HE IS PRESENTLY BEING FAVORED IN
LOCAL PRIMIN SWEEPSTAKES, AHEAD OF CONSERVATIVE FORMER STRONGMAN
HASAN AL-AMRI, RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE ABDALLAH AL-HAJRI, LEFTIST CARE

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TAKER PRIMIN ABD AL-LATIF DAYFALLAH, AND EVEN FONMIN GEGHMAN
IN THAT ORDER. THEORY, TO WHICH WE SUBSCRIBE, IS THAT HAMDI, IF HE
CAN, WOULD PREFER MILDLY LEFTIST BUT POLITICALLY INOFFENSIVE MAKKI
RATHER THAN CONSERVATIVE PRIMIN WHO WOULD BRING YARG OPENLY INTO
SAUDI ORBIT AND REDUCE HAMDI'S OWN MANEUVERING SPACE WITH LOCAL
CONSERVATIVES. MAKKI'S REPORTED RECALL, HOWEVER, REFLECTS YARG
INSTINCT FOR CONSENSUS POLITICS AND NEED TO GIVE ALL BUT
RADICAL LEFTISTS HEARING IN FORMATION NEW CABINET.
SELECTION OF NEW PRIMIN SEEMS TO BE STILL VERY MUCH OPEN
ALTHOUGH IT CANNOT BE LONG DELAYED.

4. RELIABLE SOURCE (MINSTATE SAID) TELLS US THAT HAMDI
PREPARED FOR AYNi REMOVAL BY STRENGTHENING GUARD AT
MILITARY HQS AND RADIO STATION JANUARY 12, IRONICALLY USING
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TEN T-34'S RECENTLY ACQUIRED FROM SOVIET UNION. ON EVENING
JANUARY 13 HAMDI LOYALISTS CHIEF OF STAFF AND FIRST ARMORED BRIGADE
COMMANDER LTC GHASHMI, PARATROOP COMMANDER MAJ. ABD AL-ALIM, AND
AMALIQA ELITE FORCE COMMANDER LTC ABDALLAH AL-HAMDI (PRESIDENT'S
BROTHER) PRECIPITATED VIOLENT ARGUMENT WITH PRO-AYNi ABU
LUHUMIST COMMANDERS, LTC ALI ABU LUHUM CO OF ASIFA ELITE FORCE AND
LTC MUHAMMAD ABU LUHUM OF SIXTH ARMORED BRIGADE. BOTH STORMED BACK
TO UNITS, WHILE MUHAMMAD STAYED IN PLACE REALIZING GHASHMI'S AND

ABD AL-GWIM'S UNITS WERE IN POSITION TO BLOCK HIM, ALI ATTEMPTED TO MOVE HIS UNIT AGAINST HQS. BUT WAS PREVENTED BY HAMDI LOYALISTS INSTALLED BY LATTER IN ASIFA AS DEPCO AND CHIEF OF STAFF. WE SUSPECT ARGUMENT WAS DELIVERATELY PICKED TO STIMULATE ERRATIC ALI ABU LUHUM INTO ACTION KNOWING THAT SUBORDINATES WOULD BLOCK HIM. LIKELY EFFECT IS TO DESTROY ALI'S EFFECTIVENESS AS UNIT COMMANDER OF SENSITIVE MILITARY FORCE AND TO EXPOSE POLITICALLY ABU LUHUMS AS GROUP. BOTH ALI AND MUHAMMAD PRESENTED RESIGNATIONS, BUT MUHAMMAD'S SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN, WITH PLEDGE OF LOYALTY TO HAMDI.

5. MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION NOW IS WHAT SHAIKH SINAN ABU LUHUM WILL TRY TO RESTORE HIS DECLINING FORTUNES. HIS INITIAL ATTEMPT TO CREATE SPLIT BETWEEN PRESIDENT HAMDI AND AMRI FAILED AS RESULT INTERVENTION CONSULATIVE ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT SHAIKH ABDALLAH AL-AHMAR. SECOND ATTEMPT TO TRAVEL TO SYRIA TO CONVINCE EX-PRESIDENT IRYANI TO RETURN, ON THEORY THAT IF POLITICAL EXILE AMRI COULD RETURN IRYANI

SHOULD ALSO, FAILED WHEN HAMDI ORDERED AIRPORT SECURITY AUTHORITIES NOT TO LET SINAN OUT OF COUNTRY. RECENTLY SINAN HAS BROUGHT SOME ARMED TRIBESMEN FROM HIS SMALL NIHM TRIBE INTO SANAA IN HOPE OF PROVOKING CONFRONTATION WITH ARMY. HAMDI AND AHMAR, HOWEVER, HAVE AVOIDED CONFRONTATION, BUT HAVE ALSO BROUGHT IN SOME OF AHMAR'S MORE NUMEROUS TRIBESMEN AND HAVE STRENGTHENED MILITARY POSITIONS. SITUATION THUS WEIGHED HEAVILY AGAINST SINAN. UNLESS HE SHOWS CONSIDERABLY MORE IRRATIONALITY THAN BEFORE, IT SEEMS MOST UNLIKELY THAT HE WILL RISK SHOWDOWN UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES, I.E. AS LONG AS HAMDI AND AHMAR CONTINUE TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH SAG SUPPORT SCOTES

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